

God Is Our Source

Isaiah 55:6-9

Today's message is the second of a three-part series from Isaiah, chapter 55, called, "God, Our Source." Last week, we were reminded that "There is a Source." This morning, we see that "God is our Source," and next time, that "His Word is our Joy."

Last week we looked at the question of "Source." Where do you satisfy your desires? What are you thirsting for? And what will you be taking into eternity?

Today we are going to be putting a finer point on the concept that God is your source. But there is a problem with that. How does one begin to talk about God?

Oh, we preachers try our best at the topic often enough. But, think about it, how often do we hit the mark in our descriptions of God? How much of what we say about Him is simply, to borrow Jesus' words, "the blind leading the blind?"

How does one begin to speak about the majesty and mystery of God. His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways. But when you really consider this, the very fact we that we can even talk about God is amazing. In his book *Miracles*, C. S. Lewis compares our human talk about God to shellfish talking to each other about humans. If a mystical shellfish catches a glimpse of what a human is like, he will attempt to share his vision with his fellow clams. He begins by telling them how unlike themselves humans are. Humans have no shells, like clams; they aren't attached to rocks; and they do not live surrounded by water. Those three dynamics, shells, rocks, and water are important to clams, so the clam begins to have a negative image of a human. Lewis writes, "Uncorrected by any positive insight, they build up a picture of Man as a sort of amorphous jelly (no shell) existing nowhere in particular (no rocks); and never eating (because there's no water to bring nutrients to him). So the shellfish would conclude that man is a 'famished jelly existing in a dimension less void.'"

Lewis says in a similar way our human limitations prevent us from thinking and talking correctly about God. That is why **God reveals Himself to us** in the Bible. And the Bible says while God is majestic and mysterious, we can seek Him and know Him. Isaiah 55 instructs us on when to seek God and how to seek Him. We are to seek Him while He may be found, to call on Him while He is near. This implies there will be a time when He may not be found, and when He will not be near. God is not playing some kind of cosmic Hide 'N Seek. He wants to have a love relationship with you.

Today, in verses 6 - 9, Isaiah, the prophet, reminds God's people of these essential characteristics of HIM. He tells us what we all REALLY need to know about God, and that is ...

He May Be Found (v. 6)

He Is Separated From Us (v. 7), and...

He Is Unlike Us (vv. 8-9)

I. Body

A. He May Be Found (v. 6)

a) **God is closer than you imagine**

1. He is accessible

a) "He may be found..."

b) Jer. 29:11-14 -- "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD..."

c) James 4:8 -- "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

d) Hebrews 4:14-16 -- "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

e) Illustration -- The Shack

(1) William Paul Young, a 55-year-old Gresham Oregon computer parts salesman and web designer, turned author, saw multitudes of people who saw God as "angry, distant and disappointed in us." "We're so used to God being Gandalf with an attitude," he said.

(2) With that in mind, Bill Young set out to write a book - recently released as a movie, "The Shack" - that challenged the concept of an inaccessible God. His story pulls no punches in describing human sadness and tragedy, but paints a picture of a God who is not only accessible, but present with us in the midst of our deepest sorrows. The main problem with "The Shack" is that it says the main problem with people is unforgiveness. The story neither makes mention of sin nor allows for redemption from sin. That said, the truth is...

2. He is available

a) "He is near... so call on Him."

B. He Is Separated From Us (v. 7)

a) **Someone needs to change, and it's not Him!**

1. "Turn" means to go back... to return

2. We must turn FROM

a) wicked ways

(1) literally - hostility toward God

(2) God calls us - not to a weekend retreat "kum-by-yah" session with Him at the Shack - but to confront out ugly, hate filled attitude toward Him and repent.

b) unrighteous thoughts

(1) idolatrous

(2) evil

(3) literally - to vainly exert oneself

3. We must turn TO

a) receive mercy

(1) this is not the usual word, "cheched," which means mercy, lovingkindness, and unchanging love

(a) this is the mercy that flows from God's nature

(2) this word, "racham," means

(a) deep compassionate love

(b) tender, affectionate love

(3) this is "a love of the heart"

(4) To illustrate

(a) Since the Cross, God extends love to all because, by nature, God is love. But when we turn from our evil and hostile we discover that we are, actually, the object of God's desire -- the love of His heart. And that He's been patiently waiting for us and wooing us for all this time.

b) find pardon

(1) "freely" -- not without cost, for it cost Jesus everything

(2) more accurately, abundantly

(3) multiplied pardon, increased greatly, exceedingly

C. He Is Unlike Us (vv. 8-9)

a) **Whenever will we stop asking God to agree with our perspective on things?**

1. The heart of the question, from Job's own words

a) in Job 10:4-5 -- "Do You have eyes of flesh? Or do You see as man sees? Are Your days like the days of a mortal man? Are Your years like the days of a mighty man,"

b) his friends' question, from Job 11:7 -- "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty"

2. His thoughts

a) different in nature

b) ours are finite and limited

c) His are infinite and unlimited

3. His ways

a) the course of his "life" is different than ours

b) His moral character is different.

c) Another issue that Bible scholars have with the story, The Shack is that it puts words and thoughts into God's mouth that make Him "just like us."

4. Our thoughts and ways can BECOME like His

a) 2 Cor. 3:18 -- "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

b) through the washing of the word (Eph. 5:26)

c) through the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2 and Eph. 4:23)

II. Conclusion

- A. The Apostle Paul is so overwhelmed by the greatness and majesty of God He breaks out with these words in Romans 11:33-36: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!
 " For who has known the mind of the LORD?
 Or who has become His counselor?"
 " Or who has first given to Him
 And it shall be repaid to him?"
For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen"
- B. In the movie "Rudy," the undersized Notre Dame football player endures some tough times because his dream to play for Notre Dame is not being fulfilled. He goes to see a wise Catholic priest named Father Cavanaugh. In one of the best lines ever to come out of Hollywood, Father Cavanaugh says, "Son, in 35 years of religious study, I have only come up with two hard incontrovertible facts: there is a God and I'm not Him." I would add to that a third incontrovertible fact: There is a God, you're not Him, but you can know Him!
- C. The reason that The Shack is such a popular story is that people are LONGING to know God. And you CAN know Him, but it comes on His terms, not ours.
- D. You can know Him because
 - 1. He may be found
 - a) He is accessible and
 - b) available to you
 - 2. He is separate from us.
 - a) We must turn to Him so that...
 - b) We can receive from Him
 - 3. He is unlike us
 - a) Both His thoughts and
 - b) His ways are different from ours, but...
 - c) There is a way whereby we can become like Him.